



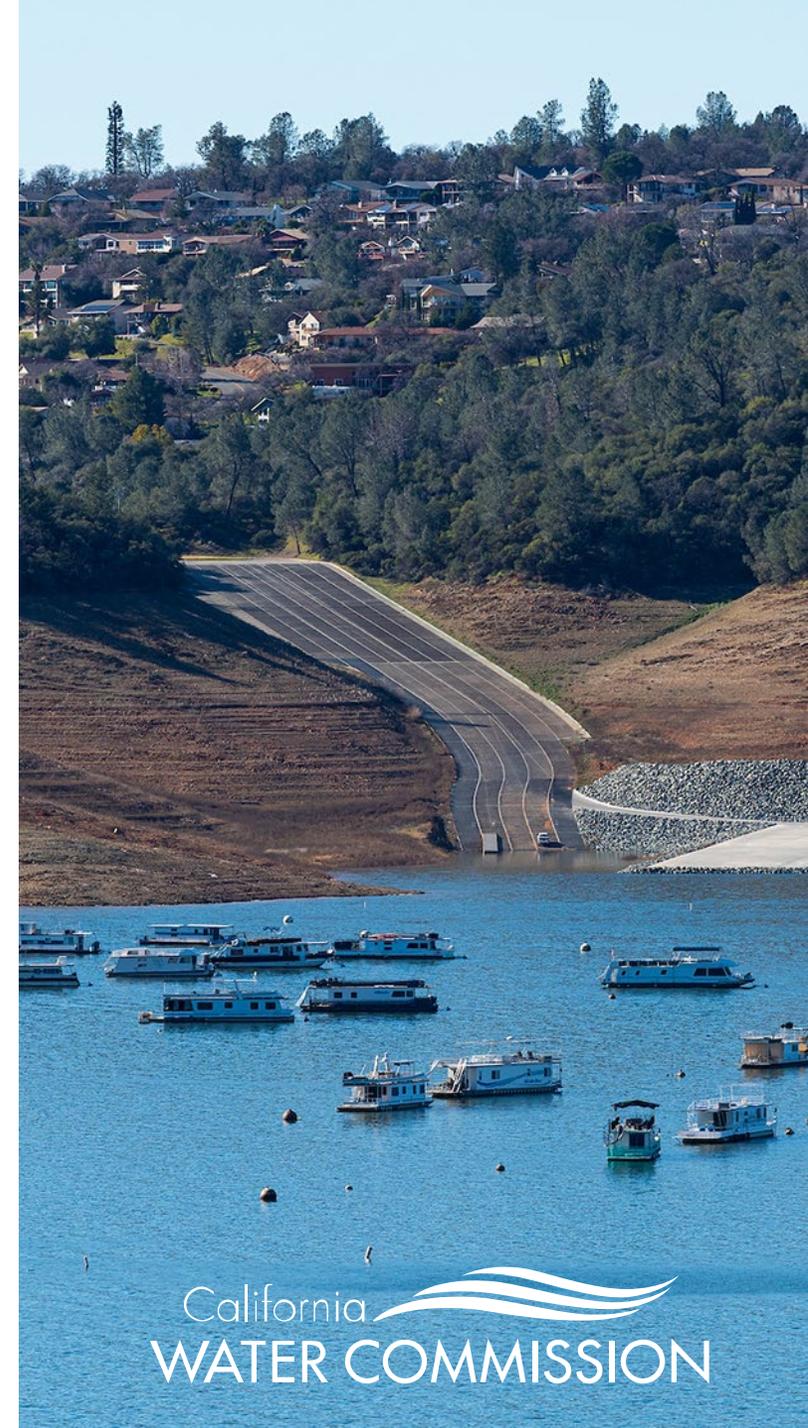
California Water Commission
Long-term Drought:
Drought Working Group Report-out
April 19, 2022

Water Resilience Portfolio Action 26.3

Develop strategies to protect communities
and fish and wildlife in the event of
drought lasting at least six years

Drought Working Group

- **Participants**: Interested parties and partner agencies
- **Objective**: Develop preliminary strategies to protect communities and fish and wildlife in the event of long-term drought.
- **Vision**: Produce bold, actionable, consensus-driven drought strategies that reflect the needs of California's diverse communities and natural resources, as well as the long-term, overarching needs of the state.



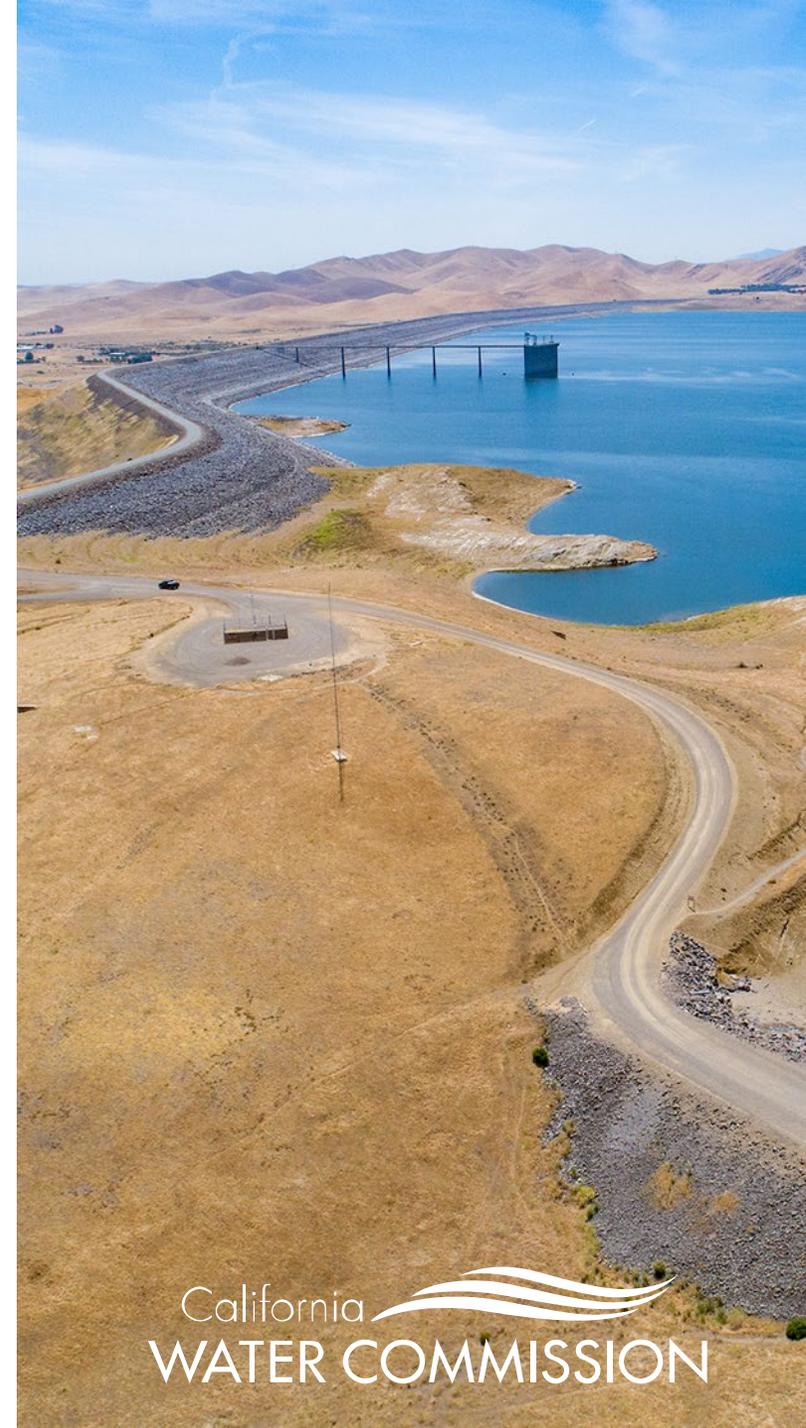
Context for Discussions

tribes
planning
solutions
small
coordination
focused
engagement
wet-year
future
data
local
levels
context
decision-making
state
scarcity
water
improving
fatigue
strategies
bold
communities
changes
climate
sigma
widespread
ground
regional
change
evolving
regulatory
under-resourced
efficiency
accountability
follow-through

Context for Discussions

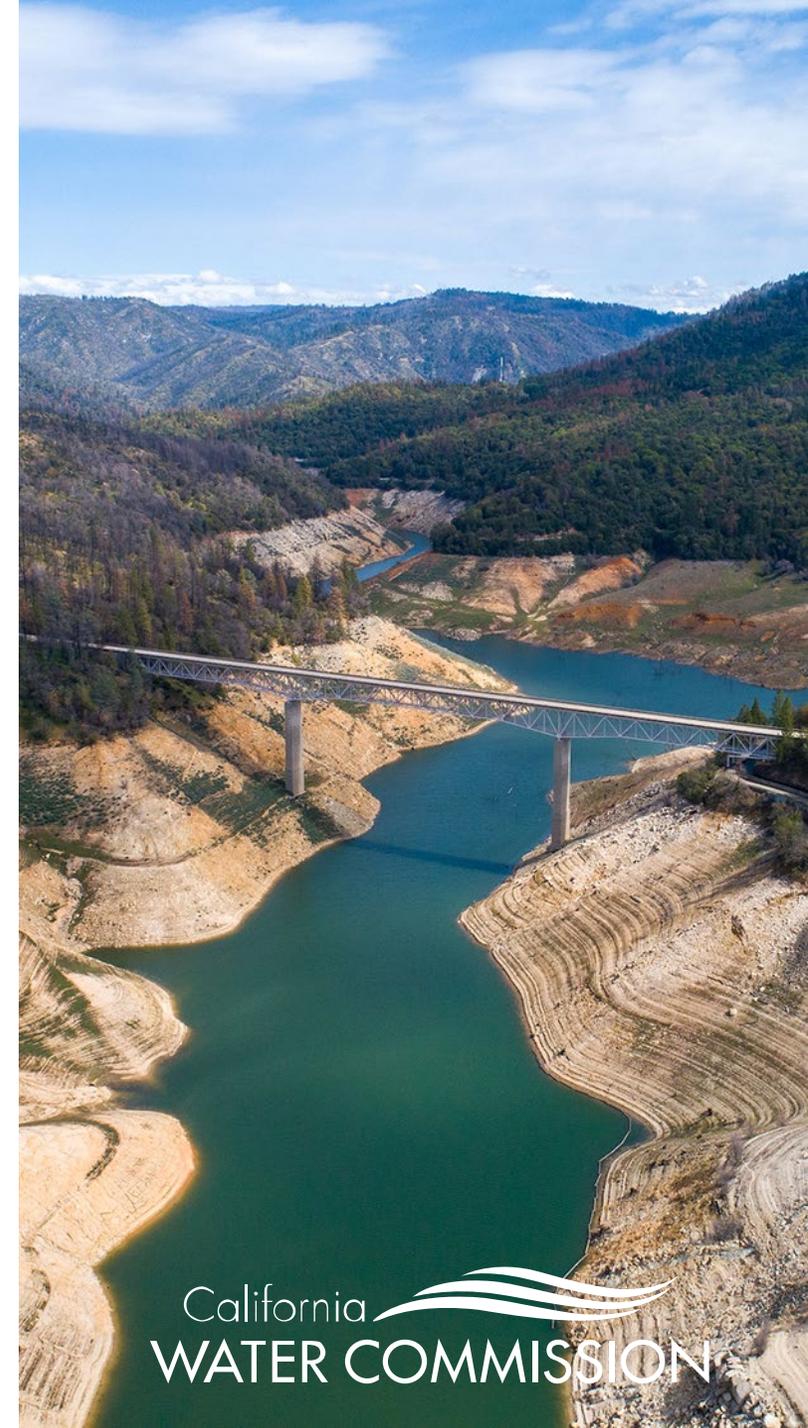
Types of drought strategies:

1. Surface storage
2. Groundwater storage
3. Conveyance, or “the grid”
4. Demand management (includes water rights)
5. Environmental and public protections



Concept 1: Improve Coordination and Communication During Drought and Non-Drought Years

1. Dedicated drought capacity at State agencies.
 - a) Coordinate between agencies, across sectors (DRIP Collaborative).
 - b) Catalog actions, ID lessons learned, create plan.
2. Develop consistent public information campaign to shift behavior.
 - a) Inventory work that has been done by local, State agencies, and federal government.
 - b) Develop indicators showing drought impacts to agriculture, cities, small communities, Tribes, and the environment.
 - c) Ensure research-based, consistent messaging at the State and local levels to educate Californians statewide.



Concept 2: Scale Up Groundwater Recharge

1. Prepare for recharge.
 - a) Identify areas where recharge is likely to improve ecosystems, drinking water wells, flood attenuation, groundwater basins.
 - b) Identify landowners willing to hold water for recharge.
2. Promote recharge efforts through education, outreach, and incentives.
 - a) Conduct education and outreach campaign regarding permitting.
 - b) Incentivize private landowner participation.
 - c) Provide incentives to spur recharge that will advance priority recharge efforts as identified in 1(a) above; to small, under-resourced communities and Tribes; for coordination across water users, including with the State.



Concept 2: Scale Up Groundwater Recharge

3. Streamline permitting to maximize groundwater recharge.
 - a) Clarify flood triggers.
 - b) Consider impacts to drinking water.
 - c) Ensure timely, comprehensive environmental review.
4. Build or improve infrastructure connected to groundwater recharge.
 - a) Fund the installation of fish screens on points of diversion.
 - b) Invest in conveyance, in line with the suggestions made in the Commission's conveyance white paper.
 - c) Support surface storage projects that can store water for recharge.



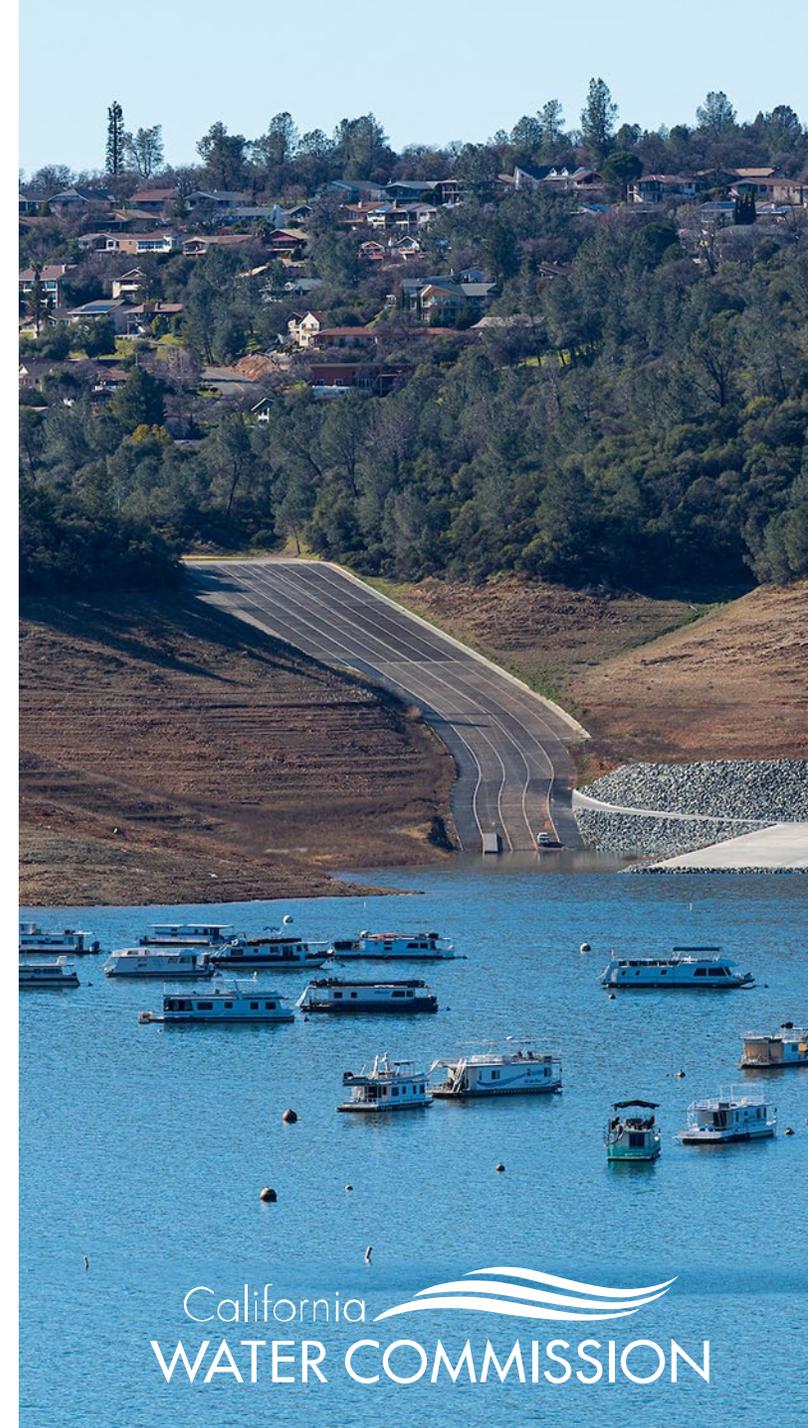
Concept 3: Reduce Ecosystem Impacts of Drought

1. Develop environmental watering plans for California.
 - a) Identify priority watersheds, work with regulators, landowners, and others to create an environmental watering plan.
 - b) Identify and secure assets for the environment that can be flexibly deployed and assign an independent trustee to manage those assets.
2. Conduct watershed-scale habitat planning that inventories, prioritizes, and identifies funding gaps for habitat restoration and preservation projects.
 - a) Tap State Conservancies, Dept. of Conservation, other jurisdictions to lead habitat planning work and provide funding for planning, engagement, and alignment with other efforts (e.g., 30 X 30 program).
 - b) Establish sustained funding for priority projects that includes endowment funding for on-going stewardship.



Concept 4: Better Position Communities to Respond to Drought Emergencies

1. For small and/or rural, disadvantaged communities, create expedited responses and allow delegation of funding management to local assistance providers for pre-approved categories of activities with expedited State sign-off for expenditures under certain dollar thresholds and/or with pre-approved pricing levels for solutions that address system needs.
 - a) Establish an emergency fund to be administered by the technical assistance providers.
 - b) Allow use of funds to resolve emergencies when they occur and those that are imminent, including loss of over 50% of water supply, sudden contamination by primary drinking water contaminants, loss of small system operator and/or other crucial staff at remote systems, fire damage to system, power failure, and natural disasters.
 - c) Expand the categories of emergency assistance to include protections for farmworkers during times of drought.



Other Potential Strategies

Continue to discuss

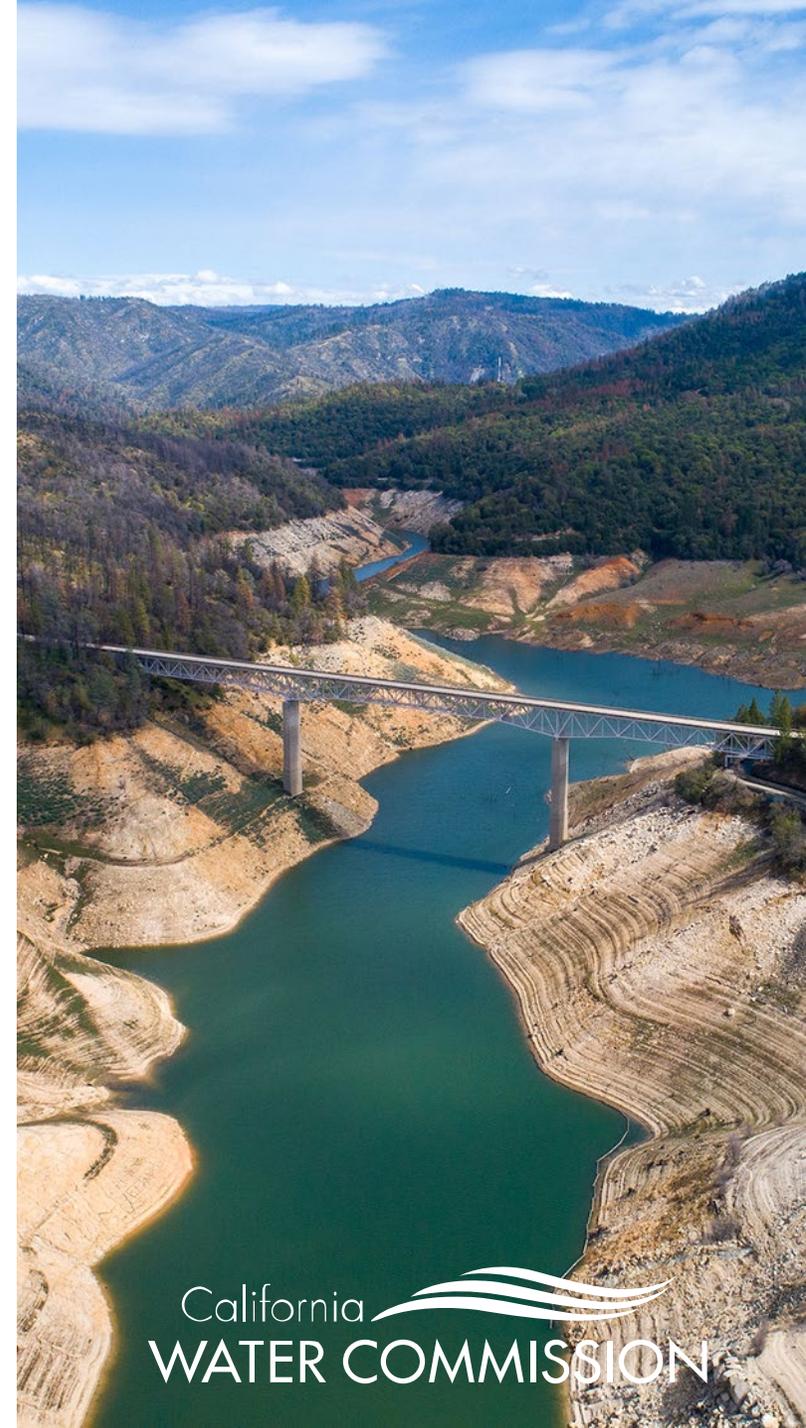
- Forest/Fire Management
- Land Repurposing

Already underway

- Better Data for FIRO, seasonal forecasting
- Water Recycling
- Stormwater Capture
- Desal?

Better tackled elsewhere

- State Level Drought Plan → DRIP Collaborative?
CA Water Plan?
- Inventory Current Drought Efforts → Integrate into the above
- Protection of Tribal cultural and ceremonial purposes →
Embed in all strategies



Timeline

MONTH	ACTIVITIES
April	Report out on Working Group discussions
May	Desalination panel Public outreach (staff work)
June	Recap of expert panels Public outreach (staff work)
July	Public workshops (staff work)
August	Report out on workshops Presentation of draft white paper
September	Presentation of final white paper